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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/762,879	01/22/2004	Joseph H. Holland	LMK-100US	5447
23122	7590	04/13/2010	EXAMINER	
RATNERPRESTIA			SWEARINGEN, JEFFREY R	
P.O. BOX 980			ART UNIT	
VALLEY FORGE, PA 19482			PAPER NUMBER	
			2445	
			MAIL DATE	
			DELIVERY MODE	
			04/13/2010	
			PAPER	

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

# Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/762,879

**Applicant(s)**

HOLLAND ET AL.

**Examiner**

Jeffrey R. Swearingen

**Art Unit**

2445

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 January 2010.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SI/220)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-19 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 12, 14-16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan et al. (US 2002/0010743) in view of Cseri (US 5,623,591).
4. In regard to claims 1, 18, Ryan disclosed *a method of enabling access to a data structure having a plurality of sections, said method comprising the steps of:*

*associating addresses of users with respective sections of the data structure wherein each of the respective sections is comprised of a plurality of independently accessible storage areas; The names of all the collaborators assigned to one of the worksheets in the spreadsheet is stored. Ryan, [106]. Collaborators are identified by email address. Ryan [101].*

*granting access rights for each of the users to access the sections corresponding to the associated addresses of the respective users* If the selected worksheet is not

included in the worksheet names stored in the first entry of the recipient table..., the worksheet is then hidden and locked via a password. Ryan, [106-107]

*preventing any of said users from having access to any of said sections which have not been associated with the address of said any of said users, wherein the sections of the data structure exist and include data prior to said access rights being granted, and wherein any of said sections to which any of the users has been prevented access are not displayed in each of the users' respective common layer; and If the selected worksheet is not included in the worksheet names stored in the first entry of the recipient table..., the worksheet is then hidden and locked via a password. Ryan, [106-107]*

*enabling each of the users to access the storage areas in the respective sections of the data structure associated with each users' respective address after said access rights are granted. Ryan, [106-107]*

Ryan failed to disclose *displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*

*wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections*

However, Cseri disclosed *displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...* Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections* Cseri disclosed setting blocks of properties for a page, and page properties, in Figure 5A. Figure 6F discloses setting protections for an active block of cells. An example is selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties.

Ryan disclosed setting spreadsheet security properties to protect a worksheet, which was part of a workbook, from being accessed by others that were not authorized for access. Ryan, [0106]-[0107]. Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheet security policies for cells. Figure 5A. Spreadsheets are made up of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells, and a workbook was constituted of worksheets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet, which is an entire page of cells, that one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet constituting a block of cells as taught in Cseri, in order to allow more flexibility in what data the authorized users are allowed to access and see.

5. In regard to claim 2, Ryan disclosed *said step of associating includes entering the addresses into respective linking sections of the data structure, each of the linking sections being associated with a portion of the sections of the data structure*. Ryan, [103], assigning contributors to the worksheets of a spreadsheet workbook.

6. In regard to claim 3, Ryan disclosed *said step of associating includes associating the addresses to the respective sections of the data structure from another data structure*. Ryan, [103], assigning contributors to the worksheets of a spreadsheet workbook.
7. In regard to claim 5, Ryan disclosed *creating, by one of the users, a password, to limit access to the sections of the data structure associated with the one user's address to the one user and other users having access rights to the sections of the data structure associated with the one user's address*. Password in Ryan, [106]
8. In regard to claim 6, Ryan disclosed *reassigning, by one of the users, said access rights to at least a portion of the sections of the data structure associated with the one user's address to another user*. Ryan, [103]
9. In regard to claim 7, Ryan disclosed *step of enabling includes enabling at least one of editing the respective sections by users corresponding to the associated addresses, and viewing the respective sections by users corresponding to the associated addresses*. Ryan, [106]
10. In regard to claim 9, Ryan disclosed *said step of associating includes selecting at least one section in the data structure and entering the respective address into a linking section of the data structure to link the at least one selected section with the user associated with the entered address, and said step of enabling includes enabling access to the at least one selected section to the user associated with the entered address*. Ryan, [103]

11. In regard to claim 12, Ryan disclosed *a method of accessing a data structure, said method comprising the steps of:*

*receiving authorization, by a user, to access at least a portion of a plurality of sections included in the data structure..., the authorization being provided by associating an address of the user with the portion of the sections in the data structure, wherein each of the sections is comprised of a plurality of independently accessible storage areas; The names of all the collaborators assigned to one of the worksheets in the spreadsheet is stored. Ryan, [106]. Collaborators are identified by email address. Ryan [101].*

*granting access rights for the user to access the portion of the sections responsive to the received authorization*

...

*preventing users other than the user from having access to any of said sections which have not been associated with the address of said any of said users, wherein the sections of the data structure exist and include data prior to said access rights being granted, and wherein any of said sections to which any of the users has been prevented access are not displayed in each of the users' respective common layer; and If the selected worksheet is not included in the worksheet names stored in the first entry of the recipient table..., the worksheet is then hidden and locked via a password. Ryan, [106-107]*

*enabling the user to access the portion of the sections of the data structure associated with the address of said user, after said access rights are granted.* Ryan, [106-107]

*Ryan failed to disclose a common spreadsheet, displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*

*wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections, and*

*displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet*

However, Cseri disclosed a common spreadsheet, Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completely overlapping said another of said sections* Cseri disclosed setting blocks of properties for a page, and page properties, in Figure 5A. Figure 6F discloses setting protections for an active block of cells. An example is selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties.



*displaying the sections each of the users has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

Ryan disclosed setting spreadsheet security properties to protect a worksheet, which was part of a workbook, from being accessed by others that were not authorized for access. Ryan, [0106]-[0107]. Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheet security policies for cells. Figure 5A. Spreadsheets are made up of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells, and a workbook was constituted of worksheets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet, which is an entire page of cells, that one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet constituting a block of cells as taught in Cseri, in order to allow more flexibility in what data the authorized users are allowed to access and see.

12. In regard to claim 14, Ryan disclosed *creating, by the user, a password, to limit access to portion of the sections of the data structure to the user and said other users having said access rights to the portion of the sections of the data structure.* Password in Ryan, [106]

13. In regard to claim 15, Ryan disclosed *reassigning, by the user, said access rights to at least a portion of the sections of the data structure to another one of said users.* Ryan, [103]

14. In regard to claim 16, Ryan disclosed *step of receiving includes at least one of receiving authorization to edit the portion of the sections, and receiving authorization to view the portion of the sections*. Ryan, [106]

15. Claims 8, 10, 11, 17, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan in view of Cseri in view of Guttman et al. (US 6,988,241).

16. In regard to claim 8, Ryan failed to disclose *associating the addresses of the users with respective data cells of a spreadsheet included in the data structure*. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

17. In regard to claim 10, Ryan failed to disclose *selecting the at least one section as a data cell in a spreadsheet, and enabling access to the data cell to the user associated*

with the entered address. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

18. In regard to claim 11, Ryan in view of Guttman failed to disclose *said step of selecting includes at least one of highlighting the data cell and clicking on the data cell*. Ryan and Guttman both disclosed using spreadsheets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that either Ryan or Guttman would have allowed highlighting and clicking on data cells to allow information to be accessed and edited.

19. In regard to claim 17, Ryan failed to disclose *accessing the portions of the sections as data cells in a spreadsheet*. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy

of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

20. In regard to claim 19, Ryan disclosed *a method of enabling access to a data structure, said method comprising the steps of:*

*associating a first [cell] with a first section of the data structure comprised of independently accessible storage areas;* Ryan, [0106]

*associating a second [cell] with a second section of the data structure;* Ryan, [0106]

*associating a first address of a first user with the first [cell];* Ryan, [0106]

*associating a second address of a second user with the second [cell];* Ryan, [0106]

*granting first access rights for the first user to access the first section of the data structure* Ryan, [0106]

*granting second access rights for the second user to access the second section of the data structure* Ryan, [0106]

*preventing the first user from accessing data in the second section, wherein the first and second sections of the data structure exist and include respective data prior to said first and second access rights being granted;* Ryan, [0106]

*enabling the first user to view data contained in only the first section of the data structure associated with the first address, after said first access rights are granted; and* Ryan, [0106]

*enabling the second user to view data contained in only the second section of the data structure associated with the second address, after said second access rights are granted.* Ryan, [0106]

Ryan failed to disclose the sections of the data structure were cells in a spreadsheet. Ryan disclosed using a spreadsheet (Figure 1), [0050]. Ryan disclosed that spreadsheets could protect individual cells in the prior art, and stated the need to restrict access to individual worksheets in order to retain privacy of confidential information. Ryan, [13]. Guttman also disclosed a spreadsheet system using data cells. Guttman was able to determine whether an individual cell was editable or locked. Guttman, column 9, lines 19-30. Ryan prevented worksheets from being edited by hiding the individual worksheets in the workbook that were not accessible to the user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan stated a need and ability to protect a single cell in a spreadsheet, and if Ryan was able to lock and hide an individual worksheet of a workbook, and Guttman disclosed locking an individual cell, that Ryan could be modified to lock and hide individual cells in the same manner as Ryan locked and hid individual worksheets.

Ryan failed to disclose *on a common spreadsheet, displaying the sections each of the first user and the second user has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet...*

*wherein the first section partially overlaps the second section without completely overlapping the second section, and*

However, Cseri disclosed *on a common spreadsheet*, Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*displaying the sections each of the first user and the second user has access to as a respective common layer of the common spreadsheet ...*Cseri disclosed a common layer of a spreadsheet in Figure 2A

*wherein the first section partially overlaps the second section without completely overlapping the second section, and*

Cseri disclosed setting blocks of properties for a page, and page properties, in Figure 5A. Figure 6F discloses setting protections for an active block of cells. An example is selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties.

Ryan disclosed setting spreadsheet security properties to protect a worksheet, which was part of a workbook, from being accessed by others that were not authorized for access. Ryan, [0106]-[0107]. Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheet security policies for cells. Figure 5A. Spreadsheets are made up of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells, and a workbook was constituted of worksheets. It would have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet, which is an entire page of cells, that one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet constituting a block of cells as taught in Cseri, in order to allow more flexibility in what data the authorized users are allowed to access and see.

21. Claims 4 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryan in view of Cseri in view of Obhan (US 5,875,302).

22. In regard to claim 4, Ryan failed to disclose *sending an e-mail to one of the users alerting the user of the user's ability to access the sections of the data structure associated with the user's address*. However, Obhan disclosed using a system to send notification to a user's email address. Obhan, column 6, lines 46-65. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to use email notification techniques with Ryan in order to alert users of changes to the Ryan system which were pertinent to their respective accounts.

23. In regard to claim 13, Ryan failed to disclose *receiving, by the user, an e-mail alerting the user of the user's ability to access the portion of the sections*. However, Obhan disclosed using a system to send notification to a user's email address. Obhan, column 6, lines 46-65. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to use email notification techniques with Ryan in order to alert users of changes to the Ryan system which were pertinent to their respective accounts.

**Conclusion**

24. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

25. Takano US 6,055,549

26. Adler et al. US 6,138,130

27. Wisniewski US 6,460,059

28. Press US 7,000,181

29. Webster et al. US 7,107,519

30. Hildreth US 7,542,921

31. Engel et al. US 7,624,339

32. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP

§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.



Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey R. Swearingen whose telephone number is (571)272-3921. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vivek Srivastava can be reached on 571-272-7304. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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